

Episode #951 Matthew 28 Part 4-The Great Commission

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. The Lord was just meeting with His eleven disciples in Galilee on a mountain. They worshiped Him, but some doubted, yet He assured them that He has all power and authority.

Now we go on to consider

III. The Great Commission of Matthew. Matthew 28:18-20.

A. *Resultant Version. And Jesus approaching them spoke unto them, saying, “All authority in heaven and in earth has been given to Me. 19. Going therefore, disciple all the nations, relating them to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: 20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you all the days, even to the consummation of the eon.*

B. Verse 19. This is commonly called the “Great Commission.” These are supposed to be our marching orders. Is this truly the case?

1. There are three “great commissions” set forth in Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-18, and Luke 24:46-49.
2. There are many who insist that the wording of these indicates that it was the declared intension of Jesus Christ that His apostles and anyone else who cares to do so should go out and herald the salvation-bringing message of God to all mankind without exception or distinction, that they should show no priority, but should go and teach the message to anyone anywhere. They will tell you that that is what they did. They will further insist that the ministry of the apostles in the Acts period was hindered by their nationalistic feelings and by their prejudices against the Gentiles. Now in view of this, and inasmuch as this is often used against our teaching regarding the character of the ministry in the Acts period, we need to examine these commissions.
3. It was not nationalistic prejudices or bigotry that kept them from going to Gentiles. We need to take careful note of the exact instructions of Jesus Christ in each one of these commissions. Look at the exact wording here.
4. “Go ye therefore” is supposed to mean to go and settle in some foreign country as a missionary. “Teach all nations” means to preach the gospel to whatever individuals are there. “Baptizing them” is supposed to sprinkle water on them or dip them in water or pour water on them. “The name of the Father,” etc. just means this is the magical formula you are supposed to use when you do the water ceremony. “Teaching them” means to build colleges and schools and seminaries and so on, and they can count on the Lord being with them. This is supposed to be the Great Commission, and they pay little attention to what it really says.
5. Men will use this to say, “It is not a call, it is a command, ‘Go ye therefore.’” Yet often those who say this did not go themselves. They are staying right where they are, but they are trying to get other people to go. Yet they would claim that this is a command and you have to go, and anyone who does not go out as a missionary to another land is not in the will of God.

6. "Teach" is the word "disciple." This is about discipling the nations. The word occurs four times; three in Matthew, and once in Acts.
 7. Nations are bodies of people. For example, the many nations in the United Nations. Many of them are against God. What would you do if you were going to disciple a nation?
 8. A disciple is a follower of a man who is his teacher, and whom he is not only trying to learn doctrine from but also to copy his lifestyle. How would you do this to make a nation a follower and learner at the feet of Jesus Christ?
 9. This commission has to do with the service of the twelve apostles in the kingdom of God. We see great statesmen in the world today. Sometimes they go out and try to get smaller countries to be on our side. These twelve men will, in the kingdom of God, be powerful statesmen, and no other group of twelve men on earth will have more power and authority than these twelve men will have. These twelve men will have their thrones, their seats, established by God, and everything they do and say will be in connection with God. They will be welcome in every nation, in every capital on earth, before every parliament, congress, senate, and so forth on earth, since they represent God. That will be in the day when the nations are subject to Him and will be His footstool.
 10. Baptizing them is all about identifying them. When they have passed their course of school with the twelve apostles, then the nations will be identified.
 11. In Greek, this phrase is "the Holy Spirit," instead of "the Spirit the Holy," as it usually is. "The" tells us the Person of the Spirit is emphasized. The fact that "Holy" is first tells us that His holiness is emphasized. In the name of the HOLY Spirit.
- C. Verse 20. This passage, when it is honestly interpreted, has nothing to do with the proclamation of God's salvation-bringing message, the gospel which is the power of God unto every one that believes. It did not have to do with the apostles' course of actions in the Acts period, nor anyone's course of action in the present, evil eon. This directive belongs to that condition of things called the kingdom of God, that time when He governs, and it will be performed to the letter in the time after Jesus Christ has taken to Himself His great power and is exercising that in relation to the earth.
1. This commission has nothing to do with individuals, but with nations. It cannot be carried out until Jesus Christ asks of the Father and the nations are given to Him as His portion. Psalm 82:8. At the time when He does this, the kingdom of God, these twelve disciples will be serving God by sitting upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, Matthew 19:28. Then they will be even more powerful, because the world accepts them, than they were in the Acts period. Then God will have unveiled Christ, He will be known, and these men will speak for Him and represent Him, and the fact that they served under Him when He was on earth will make these men the most famous and recognized men on earth at that time.
 2. Since nations then (not now) will want to be identified to the Lord and related to Him, Psalm 67:4, 72:11, 17, 138:4, Isaiah 55:5; these powerful men who will be serving as the great judges in Israel will go forth and identify nations

to God in Christ. They will instruct those nations as such in regards to their Divine responsibilities under God's government.

3. If anyone still insists these words commission them to herald God's salvation-bringing message to men of all nations, there is one complete answer: those to whom these words were spoken did not understand these words this way. We are on safe ground when we interpret these words in the same manner these Spirit-filled, Divinely-possessed men whose words were confirmed as truth by the God they were serving and the Christ they were heralding. Who are we to say 1950 years later that they misunderstood His words and failed to obey them, just because they did not immediately go to the Gentiles?
4. No, this commission is a future commission. The commissions in Mark and Luke have to do with the Acts period. All we have to do is read these and follow carefully the Acts of the Apostles and we will find out that these men did not make any attempt to go to the Gentiles. It took a vision repeated three times before Peter would go to even one, God-fearing man in Acts 10. He did go to one household, but nothing more was done until Paul went to the Gentiles in Pisidian Antioch. Once he had spoken to the Gentiles at hand there, he did not go and look for other Gentiles in other cities. No; in the next city he sought the synagogue, went into it, and taught the ancestral Israelites there, and so it continued throughout the Acts period.
5. Today any man on earth who has come to a knowledge of Christ, who knows the truth concerning Him, can go out and offer the salvation-bringing message to anyone at all he comes across if they will listen. Even if they reject him, it makes no difference. The reason for this is not because of Matthew 28:19, but because at Acts 28:28 the salvation-bringing message of God was authorized and made freely available to the nations. It has been put in writing, and I or you can give it to anyone.
6. "Observe" means to keep or watch carefully. "Always" means all the days.
7. This is not the "end of the world," but the consummation of the eon. It means the very same consummation of the kingdom eon they asked Him about back in Matthew 24, which culminates in His second coming to be personally present for a thousand years. He said He would be with them until that time. Notice that their discipling of nations and bringing them into the kingdom takes place before His second coming.
8. The Westcott-Hort and with it the modern texts eliminate the *AmEn* at the end, but Scrivener retains it.

IV. Conclusion: Thus ends the Lord's earthly ministry as it is presented particularly to Jews and as He is presented as the King of Israel in the gospel of Matthew. Mark presents Him as God's perfect Servant, Luke as the perfect Man, and John as God in human form. Those are parallel books to this, but the sequel is the book of Acts. Yet in a way Acts was more a sequel to Mark and Luke than to Matthew 28:19-20, for the sequel to that will not take place until the manifest kingdom of God, when these twelve men take their twelve thrones and go out and disciple the nations, bringing them under God's government. Matthew is yet to be continued, and we will see its continuation in the future kingdom of God.